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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claim 21.

Please amend claims 14, 22, and 23 as follows:

1. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A holder for assisting in holding a paint container, comprising:

a cylindrical sleeve adapted to receive a thumb of a hand and having a longitudinal axis; and

a retainer having a wall with a first end connected to said sleeve, said first end being fixed relative to said sleeve, said wall having a second end extending generally perpendicular to said longitudinal axis of said sleeve to overlap a circumferential portion of said sleeve, said retainer being adapted to be attached to and detached from a handle of a paint container, whereby the retainer is attached to the handle and the sleeve receives the thumb of the hand to allow a weight of the paint container to be transferred to a remainder of the hand supporting at a bottom of the paint container.

2. (CANCELED)

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3. (ORIGINAL) A holder as set forth in claim 1 wherein said sleeve is generally tubular in shape.

4. (ORIGINAL) A holder as set forth in claim 1 wherein said sleeve extends longitudinally to form a hollow interior.

⁴
5. (ORIGINAL)

A holder as set forth in claim ³4 wherein said sleeve has at least one open end adapted to allow the thumb of the hand to extend into said hollow interior.

6. (CANCELED)

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7. (ORIGINAL)

A holder as set forth in claim 1 wherein said sleeve is made of a flexible material.

8. (CANCELED)

9. (CANCELED)

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10. (ORIGINAL)

A holder as set forth in claim 1 wherein said retainer has a general "U" shape.

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11. (ORIGINAL)

A holder as set forth in claim 1 wherein said retainer is made of a spring material.

⁸
12. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)

A holder as set forth in claim 1 wherein said first end and said second end form a hollow interior therebetween.

⁹
13. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)

A holder as set forth in claim 1 wherein said second end is movable relative to said first end.

¹¹~~14~~. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A holder for assisting in holding a paint container, comprising:

a cylindrical sleeve extending longitudinally to form a hollow interior with at least one open end adapted to receive a thumb of a hand, said sleeve being unitary circumferentially; and

a retainer having a first end connected to said sleeve and a second end extending generally perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of said sleeve to overlap a portion of said sleeve, said retainer extending from and being unitary and one-piece with said sleeve, said retainer being adapted to be attached to and detached from a handle of a paint container, whereby the retainer is attached to the handle and the sleeve receives the thumb of the hand to allow a weight of the paint container to be transferred to a remainder of the hand supporting a bottom of the paint container.

15. (CANCELED)

16. (CANCELED)

¹¹~~17~~. (ORIGINAL) A holder as set forth in claim ¹⁰~~14~~ wherein said sleeve is made of a flexible material.

18. (CANCELED)

¹²~~19~~. (ORIGINAL) A holder as set forth in claim ¹⁰~~14~~ wherein said retainer has a general "U" shape.

¹³
20. (ORIGINAL)

A holder as set forth in claim ¹⁴14 wherein said retainer is made of a spring material.

21. (CANCELED)

¹⁴
22. (CURRENTLY AMENDED)

A holder as set forth in claim ¹⁰21 ¹⁴14 wherein ~~said first end extends from said sleeve and~~ said second end is movable relative to said first end.

¹⁵
23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED)

A holder comprising:

a cylindrical sleeve having a wall extending longitudinally to form a hollow interior with at least one open end adapted to receive a thumb of a hand; and

a retainer having a first end extending from said wall of said sleeve and a second end extending generally perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of said sleeve to overlap a portion of said sleeve, said sleeve and retainer being made of a plastic material to form a monolithic structure that is unitary and one-piece, said retainer being adapted to be attached to and detached from a handle of a paint container, whereby the retainer is attached to the handle and the sleeve receives the thumb of the hand to allow a weight of the paint container to be transferred to a remainder of the hand supporting a bottom of the paint container.